## REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-9, 51, 52, and 54-56 are pending. Claims 1, 8, and 51 have been amended. New claims 55 and 56 have been added. Claims 2 and 53 have been cancelled. No new matter has been introduced. Reexamination and reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

In the September 22, 2004 Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 3-7, and 51-54 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,934,672 to Sines et al. ("Sines") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,873,645 to Belfer ("Belfer"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

### The Sines and Belfer references

Sines discloses a slot machine and methods of operation. FIG. 8 is a schematic diagram of optical components used in a secondary embodiment of the invention. FIG. 8 displays a cylindrical symbol-bearing mechanical reel 51 and optical fibers 52 arranged with input ends adjacent to the mechanical reel 51. [Col. 8, lines 23-46.] On the other ends (i.e., the display ends 54) of the optical fibers 52, the image of the mechanical reel 51 is displayed. As shown, the display ends 54 form a flat surface on which the image is displayed to a player's eye 56 (the display ends also appear to be physically connected to a flat screen, represented by the thick black line perpendicular to the optical fibers). The Examiner noted that Sines "fails to disclose defining a curved display surface having a radius of curvature that approximates the radius of a mechanical reel," but stated that "Sines discloses, at 8:26-37, that alternative reel or display configuration[s] are possible." The Examiner further stated that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to provide the curved display of a mechanical reel to the disclosure of Sines.

Belfer discloses a fiber optic cellular reflector having a honeycomb cell structure for displaying images from a projector. The honeycomb cell structure 20 "may be formed of NOMEX, which is made of coated paper with a vacuum metallized reflective finish and is bendable or curvable, so that the pattern of light may be varied." [Col. 2, lines 42-46.]

Claims 1, 3-7, 55, and 56

Claim 1, 3-7, 55, and 56 all contain, either directly or indirectly (via incorporation by reference), at least the distinguishing limitations discussed below. Representative independent claim 1 recites (with emphasis added):

> 1. A spinning reel slot machine, comprising:
> an image display device having a surface for producing **images of simulated mechanical reels**;
> a plurality of optical fibers have first ends optically coupled to said surface of said image display device and seconds ends for displaying said simulated mechanical reels to a player of said slot machine, **at least some of said second ends defining a curved display surface having a radius of curvature that approximates the radius of curvature of a mechanical reel**; and
> **a flat transmissive window in front of said curved display surface**.

Neither Sines nor Belfer, alone or in combination, disclose, teach, or suggest a spinning reel slot machine having (a) an image display device for producing image of simulated mechanical reels; (b) a plurality of optical fibers having second ends for displaying the simulated mechanical reels, at least some of which define a curved display surface having a radius of curvature that approximates the radius of curvature of a mechanical reel; and (c) a flat transmissive window in of the curved display surface. Sines discloses producing an image of an *actual mechanical reels* (the mechanical reel is located near one of the ends of a bundle of optical fibers), and therefore necessarily does not disclose producing an image of *simulated mechanical reels*. Belfer makes no disclosure whatsoever of producing any images, real or simulated, of a

mechanical reel. Accordingly, the "image of simulated mechanical reels" limitation is not present in either Sines or Belfer, alone or in combination.

Moreover, neither of the references disclose that at least some of ends of the optical fibers define a curved display surface having a *radius of curvature that approximates the radius of curvature of a mechanical reel.* Sines only discloses that the ends form a *flat plane*, as shown in FIG. 8. The Examiner noted that Sines does not disclose that the optical fibers define a curved display surface having a radius of curvature that approximates the radius of curvature of a mechanical reel. However, the Examiner stated that the Sines discloses that "alternative reel or display configuration[s] are possible," and it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to provide a curved display surface of a mechanical reel. Applicants respectfully disagree. The ends of the optical fibers of Sines form a flat display surface, and this flat surface is the only type of surface shown to the player as described in Sines. It appears as though the ends of the optical fibers are directly coupled to a flat screen (represented by the thick line perpendicular to the optical fibers) in FIG. 8. Although Sines does include "boilerplate" patent language indicating that alternative reel or display configurations are possible, it does not indicate what such alternative displays would look like. To make a curved display, the screen to which the optical fibers are coupled in Sines would also have to be curved. This is a substantial modification, and one of skill in the art would have no reason to make such a substantial modification – i.e., the teachings of Sines are solely directed to a standard flat screen.

Belfer also fails to disclose that the optical fibers define a curved display surface having a radius of curvature that approximates the radius of curvature of a mechanical reel. The Examiner stated that Belfer discloses that the optical fibers are bendable or curvable. However, even if the optical fibers are bendable or curvable, there is no disclosure that the optical fibers define a

curved display surface having a radius of curvature the approximates the *radius of curvature of a mechanical reel.* Rather than simply bending the optical fibers, it would be a significant, non-obvious modification (and would require great precision) to make the optical fibers define a curved display surface having a radius of curvature that approximates the radius of curvature of a mechanical reel.

Claim 1 further distinguishes over Sines and Belfer in that it requires a flat transmissive window in front of and separated from the curved display surface. As discussed above, Sines teaches optical fibers that are *directly physically coupled to a flat screen*, but not a flat transmissive *window in front of and separated from* the curved display surface. Belfer, on the other hand, discloses no curved display surface whatsoever.

Moreover, applicants respectfully submit that it would not have been obvious to one of skill in the art, at the time of the invention, to combine the teachings of Sines and Belfer, in the direction of the claims. Specifically, while Sines may be directed to slot machines for casinos, Belfer has no disclosure whatsoever of any uses pertaining to slot machines or any other type of gaming machines. There is none of the requisite motivation/suggestion in Sines to combine it with the teachings of Belfer. Accordingly, one of skill in the art would have no reason to combine the teachings of these references, as alleged by the Examiner.

Accordingly, for the reasons above, claims 1, 3-7, 55, and 56 distinguish over Sines, alone or in combination with Belfer. Moreover, claims 3-7 and 55-56 further distinguish over these references, as discussed below.

Specifically, claim 3 requires that "all of said second ends define said curved display surface." As discussed above, neither of the references disclose the claimed curved display

surface, and therefore all of the ends of the disclosed optical fibers in those references necessarily cannot define the required curved display surface.

Claim 4 requires that "at least some of said second ends define a flat display surface adjacent to said curved display surface." As discussed above, the claimed display surface limitation has not been met. Moreover, neither of the references disclose a display surface that is both curved and has adjacent flat display surfaces.

Claim 5 depends from claim 4 and requires that "said flat display displays alphanumeric information and said curved display surface displays symbols on said simulated mechanical reels." Neither of the references disclose such combination of flat and curved display surfaces.

Claim 6 requires that "said radius of curvature is in the range of from about 4 to about 7 inches." This range of curvature is not disclosed nor suggested by either reference.

Claims 7, 55 and 56 are all directed to the image display device. Specifically, these claims respectfully recite that the image display device is a "CRT display," an "LCD display," or an "LED array." None of these types of image display devices are disclosed, taught, or suggested by the references.

Therefore, applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of claims 1 and 3-7 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) should be withdrawn.

Claims 8 and 9

Claims 8 and 9 also distinguish over Sines, alone or in combination with Belfer. Specifically, claims 8 and 9 both contain distinguishing "simulated mechanical reels" and "array of optical fibers [having ends], said ends define a curved display surface having a radius of curvature that approximates the radius of curvature of a mechanical reel" limitations similar to those of claim 1 discussed above. Accordingly, claims 8 and 9 also distinguish over Sines, alone

or in combination with Belfer. Moreover, as discussed above with respect to claim 1, there is no motivation to combine with teachings of Sines in the direction of Belfer. Therefore, applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of claims 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) should be withdrawn.

Claims 51, 52, and 54

Claims 51, 52, and 54 contain the following distinguishing limitation similar to that of claim 4 discussed above: "wherein at least some of said second ends define a flat display surface adjacent to said curved display surface". Accordingly, claims 51, 52, and 54 also distinguish over Sines, alone or in combination with Belfer. Moreover, as discussed above with respect to claim 1, there is no motivation to combine with teachings of Sines in the direction of Belfer. Therefore, applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of claims 51, 52, and 54 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) should be withdrawn.

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## Conclusion

Applicants believe that the foregoing amendments place the application in condition for allowance, and a favorable action is respectfully requested. If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at the Chicago telephone number (312) 425-3900 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance should the Examiner believe that such a telephone conference would advance prosecution of the application.

There are no additional fee for claims in connection with the present Amendment and Reply. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any required fees while this application is pending (except the issue fee) to Jenkens & Gilchrist, P.C. Deposit Account No. 10-0447(47079-00115USPT).

Respectfully submitted,

JENKENS & GILCHRIST, P.C.

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